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Engaged & Underage

By Zach Johnson

To these three couples, none older than 25, age ain't nothin' but a number. These six people found true love and aren't letting the fact that they're not even old enough to rent a car stop them from spending forever with the person they love most.



Amanda & Sam

Little did she know that her ex-boyfriend would be the one to introduce her to the man she'd spend the rest of her life with, when Amanda Mickelson, senior in accounting, attended a high school Homecoming dance with her then-boyfriend, Eric. He casually introduced Mickelson to Sam Kramer, and once the two broke up, Kramer and Mickelson started chatting online.

Before long, the strictly internet-friendly couple were ready for a first date, but since Mickelson hadn't hit the license-ready milestone, her mother dropped her off at her church for Kramer to pick her up.

"On the car ride over to my house [from the church] I said some pretty interesting things to her, and now that I look back on it, I don't know why I did say it. Any other girl probably would have asked me to take her home right away," Kramer says.

"After that we watched three movies and during the movies I made my move and got to hold her hand—kind of cheesy—but I was extremely excited because she wanted to hold my hand. After the movies were over, I got a kiss and then I took her home."

After a few months of casual dating, Mickelson says she had a feeling that something was different with Kramer than with past boyfriends, and previous relationships.

"I could tell that Sam really cared about things that I said or did, and I could be myself around him without feeling self-conscious," she says.

And she's been herself with him for the past six years. While he was still at Iowa State, Sam accompanied Mickelson on several family trips to Hawaii. On their most recent trip, Mickelson says was hoping he'd pop the question, but unfortunately for her, the time never came. The big moment didn't happen until November 2008, and Kramer caught her completely off-guard.

"I had a friend go with me to South Dakota to find the ring and then the jeweler sent it to me later that week," Kramer says. "I began to get nervous because I was told that the ring would show up by Wednesday, and I had a bunch of friends coming up on Friday to share in the moment with us.

The ring didn't show up until Friday morning and I couldn't believe how amazing it looked. My friends began to show up and her roommates kept her busy until everyone got there," he says.

"I just thought everyone was coming to Ames so that they would cut two hours out of their Saturday morning trip to Minnesota," Mickelson says. "Sam and I, and all of our friends (including both of our brothers), were just playing some games and having a good time."

"I think in total there was about 25 people there and everyone knew what was about to happen except for her," Kramer says. "She began to get mad at me because she wanted to play beer pong that night at the party and I happened to be standing in the middle of the room. She walked up to me to yell at me and I told her to just wait because I had something else to do first. She looked really confused and when I dropped to one knee it seemed as if her heart dropped. She began to cry because she was so excited and it was by far the happiest moment of my life."

"I always wondered why girls cried when they were proposed to and now I know," Mickelson says. "I said 'yes' and he put the ring on my finger and the rest was just a blur. I was so happy! Sam had asked my parents for my hand in marriage a couple of weeks earlier and they knew he was going to ask me that night. When I called my mom to tell her, she was so excited and had been waiting for me to call all night."

Although Mickelson is only 21 and Kramer one year her senior, neither worries about rushing into the marriage.

"We've been together for almost six years. If we weren't right for each other I think we would have figured it out by now," Mickelson says. "You see plenty of people getting married after dating for a few months and they've lasted forever, so why not [get married] after six years?"

"It is never too early, or a couple is never too young, if they love each other as much as I love my fiancée," Kramer says.

Mickelson and Kramer will take their vows on July 31, 2010, in an outdoor ceremony.

"I kind of want it to be rustic but not totally Martha Stewart," Mickelson says. "It will be simple with all of the people that Sam and I care about there to support us."

"I never really envisioned a wedding when I was younger," Kramer says.



"After being with Amanda for so long the only vision I had was standing at the end of the aisle and watching her walk towards me. That makes me smile every time I think of it."

Kristin & Pat

Since they've been dating a mere two and a half years, some people might say that Kristin Gaard, junior in management, and Pat Dempsey, senior in accounting, are too young to get hitched—but that hasn't phased the happy couple one bit.

"When you know you are with the right person and want to settle down, why should age stop you? Sixty-five years ago, my grandparents were 18 and 19 when they got married, and that was acceptable. My aunt was married at age 17 and just celebrated her 45th wedding anniversary. They were young and are still completely in love

with their spouses," Gaard says. "Age is just a number. I'm ready to spend the rest of my life with the person that I'm in love with."

"People mature at different points in life. I'm ready for this now, some others aren't," Dempsey says. "I think it just depends on your personality and willingness to open your heart and commit to true love."

Gaard and Dempsey first met at a dorm party hosted by Dempsey and his roommate during the first few weeks of school. The two hit it off, but didn't start seeing each other for a few months.

"Our first date was funny," Gaard says. "Over Thanksgiving break of the same year, I had my tonsils out. I couldn't talk, so we were just texting back and forth the whole week. On a Friday afternoon, he told me he wanted to come see me—he lives in Dubuque and I live near Chicago. I told him he was crazy and that we'd

"Age is just a number. I'm ready to spend the rest of my life with the person that I'm in love with." —Kristin Gaard

see each other when I got back."

Sure enough, Friday night he showed up on my doorstep and asked to take me out for dinner," she says. "I think he forgot that I couldn't really eat, but I didn't remind him."

The two went out to dinner and then went back to her house to watch "The DaVinci Code."

"She fell asleep from all the medication she was on. It was very romantic," Dempsey jokes.

"That night he drove all the way back to Dubuque," Gaard says. "The next day I received a dozen pink roses with a "Thinking of You" note. I was hooked."

Though they broke up briefly five months into their relationship, it was while they were separated that they both realized how much they meant to each other.

In the fall of 2008, Dempsey was ready to officially take Gaard off the market. "The proposal wasn't necessarily planned, but the time felt right. I was more nervous to ask her to marry me than when I asked her dad for his blessing," Dempsey says.

The proposal was everything Gaard says she could have ever dreamed of.

"Pat and I do date nights once a week, and the week of the proposal was my week to choose our date. I planned a walk around central campus—it was in October and all the leaves were changing—to see all the pretty colors."

The two then planed on going out to dinner and then seeing a movie. After dinner they returned to Dempsey's apartment where candles were lit around the room.

"When I asked why they were lit, he said that he had just forgotten to blow them out when he left," Gaard says. "I didn't think anything of it until he told me he had something for me. I got excited when he brought out a box. It had an Apple logo on it

and so I asked 'a new computer?' He said 'No, open and see.' It was a book that he made on his computer, filled with pictures, quotes, and everything about 'The Girl.' I was in tears by the end of the book, and as I was finishing up the back cover, which had my favorite quote from First Corinthians, he pulled out a ring and asked me to marry him. I was in shock. I just started smiling and immediately said 'yes.'"

While Gaard's friends had been in on the proposal for some time, there were still a few people surprised by the news of their engagement.

"My parents were shocked, happy and excited. My friends were just ready for the open bar," Dempsey jokes.

The two plan to wed sometime between December 2009 and February 2010, though they're still deciding on an exact date. One detail they do have figured out? They'll be having a destination wedding with 25 of their closest friends and family in the Bahamas on the small island of North Bimini.

"Everyone will be barefoot and we are getting married right on the beach," Gaard says. "We both love the ocean, and it just seemed fitting for the two of us. I'm excited to spend our special day with the people who matter most in our lives."

Abbie & Scott

They weren't your typical high school sweethearts, but for the past six and half years Abbie Hill, senior in sociology, and Scott Schurman, a recent ISU graduate, have been inseparable—for the most part.

Hill and Schurman met at a post-prom party during Hill's freshman year of high school, though Hill had attended the dance with a different date while Schurman working as a server at the dance.

"I thought he was cute so I approached him," Hill says. "But I was shy, and 14, so it didn't go too far."

They continued to date through high school until Schurman graduated in 2004, when he and Hill separated for the first time (as she still had a year of high school to complete.) Schurman became active on the Iowa State campus, joining the fraternity Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Meanwhile, Hill was busy taking her ACT and preparing for graduation. In the fall of 2005, Hill and Schurman were reunited on Iowa State's campus when she started classes as a freshman.

Schurman enlisted in the military and served in Iraq for a little more than 60 days, separating the couple for another stint.

"It was really hard at first. I didn't hear from him very much at first so I was always worried about him," Hill says. "With time it got easier and I found a way to get back to my routine. Although I did start to get used to it, I still counted down the days until he came back. The part that was the worst was when he was in a place that was unsafe—not [just] that he was away."

"When I began to be active in the military I realized how much she meant to me," Schurman says.

When he returned to the United States, Schurman knew Hill was the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with. By the end of the summer of 2008, he was ready to take the plunge and propose. After requesting her parents' permission to take her hand in marriage (which they granted), all Schurman needed was the perfect moment.

"It was a nice day in August and we were walking through the Reiman Gardens at Iowa State," Hill says. "We were in this really pretty area and he knelt down and asked me. It was perfect and meaningful." **E**